

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
January 5, 2009
Minutes

Present: Bill Ruoff – Chairman
Chief Fred Douglas
Dana MacAllister
Bill Parker
Gil Archambault
Dave Wheeler

Absent: Richard Tortorelli
Mike Putnam, Board of Selectmen Representative

Kathryn Parenti, Recording Secretary

1. Roll Call vote required by the BOS.

In addition to the above listed members of the Committee, Marc Weinstein of 79 Prospect Street, Jim Sheridan, 15 Gerry's Way and president of the Ledgewood of Milford Condominium Association and Ed Dockham of 10 Gerry's Way were present.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Discussion: Phillips Way – letter from Ledgewood Condominium Association to change direction of one-way street (Forw arded from the Board of Selectmen).

B. Ruoff invited J. Sheridan to explain why they were present.

J. Sheridan began by stating they had done an independent traffic study of Phillips Way. He noted it was estimated, before the Ledgewood project was completed, that over 400 cars a day would be coming out of that project. Their traffic study, done over a period of twelve (12) hours, from 7 am to 7 pm, showed sixty (60) car trips occurred on Phillips Way. They were requesting, due to the difficulty of turning onto Nashua Street from Tonella Road, to change the direction of the road to one-way out of the development or make it a two-way road. He noted not many vehicles travel on the road and the survey was done during a busy time of the year, at the beginning of October. Of the traffic coming onto Phillips Way, six (6) vehicles came from upper Prospect Street and the rest came from lower Prospect Street. He felt most of the traffic is using Phillips Way as a cut through to Nashua Street to avoid the Oval. In addition, there are two (2) new projects on Tonella Road and there was some concern with vehicles blocking the road and the only exit out of the development. He was concerned that if he, E. Dokham or other board members were at work, no one would call the town to seek permission to exit the development from Phillips Way. He noted F. Douglas has had officers in the area in the past and people using the road incorrectly have been warned or ticketed. They would like the road to be a two-way road but it is not close to the minimum width.

B. Ruoff clarified their first preference was to make Phillips Way a two-way and the second choice was to make it one-way out. He asked if any commercial vehicles used the road.

J. Sheridan replied there was one commercial vehicle between 7:30 and 8:30 am and two (2) between 1 and 1:30pm; all the rest of the vehicles were passenger cars. The commercial vehicles were FedEx and UPS delivery trucks. He noted, during that time, there was no commercial traffic that went to the Isle of Ledgewood; most commercial vehicles use Tonella Road. He noted there is a bad corner on Prospect Street but there are two (2) bad turns on Tonella Road.

E. Dokham stated there is definitely a problem getting onto Nashua Street at certain times of the day and if they could go out of the development via Phillips Way, it would be easier. He noted there was about 250 feet of road that would change from one-way to two-way.

M. Weinstein stated he had heard the BOS discussion regarding this situation and was disturbed by their comments so he felt it was important for him to be present at this discussion. He empathized with the difficulties of Ledgewood residents exiting onto Tonella Road. He noted that was a bad intersection before the Ledgewood Development was built; it is an historical and acknowledged problem. He would prefer no changes were made from a quality of life aspect. He noted he has walked along Prospect for many years and noted there is a safety issue with the road but he has never been hit by a car while walking on the road. He feels there is a line of sight issue exiting onto Prospect Street. During the initial hearings regarding the development, all of these suggestions were put on the table. Phillips Way is really an emergency road and should not be accessible in or out.

B. Parker noted the whole development was controversial and originally Ledgewood was proposed for all the access to go to Tonella Road and after many public hearings, it was determined but not a condition for approval, Phillips Way was to be used for emergency access. He noted there was a lot of concern with the residents of Prospect Street. He noted Ledgewood Drive is a tricky road and normal road grade is 6%; the Planning Board waived that requirement and the road grade is really 8%. He noted several people have been seeking waivers for road grades. He stated the grade of Prospect Street and Webster Street are 12-13% and Prospect Street has a 90 degree bend; that would never be approved now. Ledgewood Drive was designed with appropriate curves but with steeper grades. There were public hearings to make sure there was emergency access to the development and the road is designed to one-way standards.

J. Sheridan stated the road is between twenty (20) and twentyfour (24) feet wide and is about 250 feet long.

B. Ruoff stated he didn't know if two (2) cars can pass each other on the road. He noted the road narrows at the cul de sac.

B. Parker noted the whole issue is safety.

G. Archambault noted, as mentioned in BOS minutes, there is an unknown cost of making Phillips Way a two-way street. It was also noted that the BOS have stated they would like to leave the road as it is, as recommended by the Traffic Safety Committee in August 2006. He felt the Committee should come up with a recommendation and stick with it - to either recommend the road be a two-way road or leave it as a one-way road.

J. Sheridan said there was a third option - to install a gate on the road to only allow access to emergency personnel.

B. Ruoff stated the Committee needs to reconsider any changes or decide to not reconsider any changes.

F. Douglas stated there is an extensive history with the road and records show he was adamant that something needed to be done about Tonella Road when this project first began but nothing has been done. There has been a traffic study done for that intersection but the only thing that was done was the cutting of the inside radius of the intersection on Tonella Road where it meets Nashua Street and that was done after the project was finished.

B. Parker responded that change was part of the plan approval and to leave Tonella Road as is and stripe it for left and right turns.

F. Douglas recalled there was some discussion about taking part of the County Stores parking lot for the addition of a turn lane.

B. Parker stated the improvements were part of the traffic money received by the town but he did note the engineer stated that intersection did not warrant a traffic signal; this came out of discussions in the Down town Traffic Steering Committee.

J. Sheridan stated the worst time to get onto Nashua Street is during commuter hours and depending on the size and amount of parked cars in the County Stores parking lot, the line of sight toward the Oval is non-existent. He noted when he purchased at Ledgewood, part of the fees went toward road improvements.

E. Dokham stated the addition of a left turning lane on Tonella would be helpful.

B. Ruoff noted line painting would continue in the spring and the left and right turn lanes will be separated.

F. Douglas thought there had been a petition from Prospect Street residents stating they were not in favor of allowing traffic to come out onto Prospect Street. He wondered if the TSC had the right to reverse decisions made by the Planning Board. He did note the BOS was asking for recommendations from this committee.

B. Ruoff felt they would not be able to make a decision at this meeting. He felt the committee members should look at all the information and make their decision for the next meeting.

F. Douglas asked if the width of Phillips Way (21-24 feet) meets the town's minimum standards.

B. Ruoff replied it could; he noted in recent projects, the roads have been narrowed.

J. Sheridan noted the road did become narrower as it approaches Prospect Street.

F. Douglas recalled at a previous public hearing, back when Kevin Lynch was chairman of the TSC, where anyone could have input; he thought Ledgewood residents had attended. The TSC made the recommendation to leave Phillips Way as it was. He noted Prospect Street has a 90 degree turn and there is poor sight alignment. In addition, in a high wind snow storm, the snow has a tendency to blow east and pile up on the corner. Also, kids from the neighborhood walk on the side of the road and if cars are parked along the road, there is not much room for other vehicles to pass. He thought Tonella Road was tough as well but is the lesser of two (2) evils.

J. Sheridan, referring to the last option of the installation of a gate where only emergency vehicles have access. He noted the road, on paper, was supposed to be a two-way road and for many of the residents, Phillips Way wasn't even built when they moved in. The issues came up as the project proceeded and were never brought up until after the fact. Now that the project is completed, the developer has walked away and these issues are in the residents' hands. His traffic study showed sixty (60) vehicles use Phillips way in a twelve (12) hour day. If the Committee votes to change the road to a two-way road, that's great. If that's not the way they go, or if they go with the one-way in the opposite direction or if they can't make a clear decision then the installation of a gate would be the answer.

B. Ruoff noted in the early states of the project, they contemplated that the road be for emergency access only and have a gate.

J. Sheridan noted in the early approved plans a road was shown to go behind the Isle of Ledgewood to provide access to the water tower and a proposed third unit.

F. Douglas asked if there was any proposed expansion for Ledgewood.

B. Parker stated it was conceivable that Ledgewood or some form of it would go down to Route 13 South.

F. Douglas spoke about the duplex projects on Tonella Road and stated the builders will not shut down the road without his permission.

B. Ruoff added they can't dig into the road without his permission.

E. Dokham noted they had already closed off part of the road to less than ½ of a lane to dig to put in the utilities.

D. MacAlister replied they had blocked part of the road and did have vehicles in the road.

F. Douglas told J. Sheridan and E. Dokham to call his office if that happens again.

E. Dokham stated at the Zoning Board meeting regarding this duplex project, the developer stated there would be no parking on the street by the residents but he was concerned with what might happen if the residents have guests.

G. Archambault stated the duplex project was just approved a short while ago. He noted to the concerned Ledgewood residents that the Committee will submit their recommendations and noted that what has been approved is not written in granite.

J. Sheridan stated that's all they can ask and he was only here because the residents asked that this issue be brought forward again.

F. Douglas noted he was also at the ZBA meeting and did note the developer stated there would be enough off street parking for the residents. He thought Tonella Road should be posted as no parking if they are making all the residents of Ledgewood go down the road. He did note the winter parking ban prohibits overnight parking on all streets from November 15 to April 15.

B. Ruoff asked the Committee what they wanted to do.

F. Douglas recommended each member make a decision and put it in writing for the next meeting.

B. Ruoff recommended they take into consideration the original findings as well.

F. Douglas made a motion to see if the Committee can reform another opinion for the BOS and take into consideration any suggestions presented today.

D. Wheeler seconded the motion.

All were in favor; none were opposed.

E. Dokham asked if there was a traffic count on vehicles that use Ledgewood Drive every day.

B. Parker replied no, not since the development opened completely.

E. Dokham recommended they install a traffic counter.

B. Parker thought they might be able to borrow one from Regional Planning at no cost.

MINUTES:

3. *Approval of minutes from October 27, 2008.*

B. Ruoff asked if there were any comments or questions with regard to the minutes; there were none so he asked for a motion to approve.

B. Parker made the motion to approve the minutes as written.

F. Douglas seconded the motion.

All were in favor; none opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS:

4. *Discussion: Reduction of speed limit in the urban compact area of Milford; possible ordinance drafting. (Continued from October 27, 2008).*

B. Parker stated the sub-committee had not had a chance to work on it but would as soon R. Tortorelli came back from vacation.

5. *Unevenly painted lines near the Nashua and School Street intersection.*

G. Archambault asked to revisit the lineage on School Street near the intersection of Nashua and School Street and asked why was not evenly painted; there is an uneven amount of road on either side of the painted line.

B. Ruoff replied that the painting machine is set up for the width of the road and that portion of the road is wider and thus the reason for the lane width difference.

G. Archambault noted there was some difficulty making the turn from Nashua Street onto School Street without crossing over the yellow line; he thought it was illegal to cross the yellow line.

D. Wheeler thought the lines on School Street were that way for the fire trucks to turn onto the street more easily.

F. Douglas stated if there was an accident, the crossing of yellow lines would be noted in the accident report and the driver may or may not be cited for that violation.

6. Stop sign at Maple Street and North River Road.

G. Archambault asked if this had been addressed.

F. Douglas reported the stop sign is installed.

B. Ruoff stated the developer of Falcon Ridge had installed it before closing up the project for the winter.

B. Ruoff stated the next meeting would be on January 26, 2009 and it would only be changed if no one was able to complete their tasks in time for that meeting.

B. Parker said he would be able to pull together information regarding the Ledgewood project.

B. Ruoff said the options to mull over were if they wanted to go with F. Douglas' statements that Prospect Street was too dangerous to route traffic onto it or if they wanted to change direction of Phillips Way or to restrict it to car traffic and no delivery trucks.

B. Parker said they can't restrict the type of vehicles travelling on the road.

F. Douglas stated there have been many meetings about this area and there are a lot of minutes stating how the Committee came to the previous decision.

B. Ruoff recalled from early meeting that the former fire chief wanted access for emergency access and he clearly remembered the proposal for a one-way road with a gate.

F. Douglas thought a bullet document should be made up with all the suggestions made today for people to rank in order of their preference, taking all the information presented into account. The results would then be tallied up on January 26, 2009.

B. Ruoff asked if there was a motion to adjourn.

B. Parker made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

D. Wheeler seconded.

All were in favor.